

REMARKS

Claims 17-37 and 40 are pending in the application, claims 1-16, 38 and 39 being canceled without prejudice herein pursuant to a Restriction Requirement made by the Examiner. Claims 17 and 40 are the only independent claims.

The specification has been amended to provide antecedent support for new language added to independent claim 17 herein. The new language is not considered new matter as it merely describes in greater detail features of applicant's cannula holder assembly as shown in the drawings.

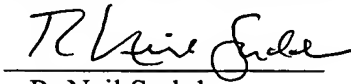
The present Amendment is submitted to cancel withdrawn claims and to more clearly distinguish applicant's claimed invention over the Figure 8 disclosure of International Patent Application Publication No. WO 97/42889 (Giannadakis). That reference has been recently submitted in an Information Disclosure Statement. A copy of the reference is enclosed herewith.

Claim 17 as amended herein distinguishes over the Giannadakis PCT patent application publication because that reference discloses a laparoscopic instrument holder with a *single* aperture (with several lobes) in each of two transverse plates (Figure 8) rather than multiple separate and mutually spaced apertures in either of the plates. The communication of the different lobes with a central part of the single aperture in Figures 8A and 8B of the Giannadakis PCT patent application publication appears to be essential to the conceived working and use of the device.

Should the Examiner believe that direct contact with applicant's attorney would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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